The
COMMONWEAL

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Way Station or Terminal?

IT IS NOT possible to go into much detail when you attempt to sketch the general framework of the reorganization of the world after the war in some five hundred words. Particularly when a good portion of such a statement has to do with the months of consultation which went into its preparation. The President's statement on the peace, then, contained only the broadest outlines; and little of the comment in the daily press ventured beyond the bare text of that important statement.

The resemblance to the League of Nations is a striking one. There is to be a new Council and a new Assembly and a new international tribunal. The current "peace-loving nations" would correspond to the membership of the League Assembly; the United States, Britain, Russia and China would be permanent members of the new Council; with Russia and China supplanting the France, Italy and Japan of the Wilsonian Council. (And again there would be four members from the smaller nations elected at regular intervals.) More authority is to be vested in the Council this time, so that responsibility in the new League will correspond still more closely to actual power. The designation of "justifiable disputes" as the province of the new tribunal is a limitation which was not put upon the World Court. It seems to imply that the Council itself will take a great many matters in hand.

The crux of the matter of postwar international organization is, of course, the question of enforcement. America's unwillingness to accept the responsibilities of Article 16 of the League Covenant was the chief reason for our refusal to follow Mr. Wilson into the League; the failure of sanctions against Mussolini and other efforts to enforce League decisions led straight to the current war. That is why more and more American peace organizations have adopted the originally French thesis of the international police force. Mr. Roosevelt, on the other hand, specifically rules out the creation of such a means of peace enforcement. He calls rather for the maintenance of national armaments by all member nations with each accepting a responsibility for the maintenance of the peace which is commensurate with its ability.

Such definite talk about an international organization coming from the President at a time when the progress of the Allied forces is bringing the end of the European war in sight is encouraging indeed. Especially if the new world which he envisions is not a fixed world; if the organization which he favors setting up is viewed as only the beginning of a more integrated world organization. For there is much to be said for attaining full-fledged international cooperation through gradual stages. There is no hint in his statement whether he views the new League as temporary or comparatively permanent.

To the many American peace organizations which have consistently been advocating world government the President's statement is a grave disappointment. It appears too much like a mere continuation of dictation by the new Big Three, too little a plan for setting up a responsible, representative body of the nations or peoples of the world. Doubtless there are many other groups which consulted with our State Department authorities during the past eighteen months besides the nation's peace organizations; Mr. Roosevelt may be right that these conferences indicate that the American people would be unwilling even in the midst of this war to make greater international commitments than those required by the organization he foresees. One wonders.

There are straws to the contrary here and there. One of these is the success of the International Petition drawn up by Edward T. Clark of Goshen, New York. It is exceedingly simple. The signer declares himself in favor of "an International Organization composed of the representatives of all peoples whose nations accept the rule of law; an International Judiciary devoted to the

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attainment of political and social justice; an International Police Force to prevent aggression and assure the enforcement of law and order." At present writing about a dozen organizations—among them the Y—and several thousand individuals have endorsed this petition. And even weightier evidence of our growing internationalist viewpoint can be found in the Gallup polls. It is an important moment for the American people to make known their willingness to assume international responsibilities—a willingness that gives far greater hope of preventing another war than a new Big Power alliance system.

For Shame!

THE ONLY possible interpretation of Attorney General Biddle's extraordinary action in releasing a report to New Jersey's former Governor Edison regarding the case of John Longo is that Mayor Hague, Longo's enemy, put the heat on the Department of Justice by virtue of his vice-chairmanship of the Democratic Party. The whole episode represents the New Deal at its political worst. And it is particularly unfortunate because the record of the Department of Justice has by and large been so good.

Some months ago we published an extensive account of Longo's career and of his recent trial and sentence to prison. This trial, there is good reason to believe, represented an attempt to railroad a man who has long been an effective opponent of Jersey City's boss. An appeal was taken to the New Jersey Supreme Court, which has not yet handed down a decision. On January 17 Governor Edison had requested the Department of Justice to make a full investigation of Longo's trial. Mr. Biddle's report to the ex-Governor was contained in a letter dated May 11, in which it is said that the Attorney General promised to withhold publication of the report until the New Jersey Supreme Court had rendered its decision. His change of mind not only is ethically dubious, but even seems to be very poor politics, for it is a question whether Boss Hague is any longer capable of delivering the Jersey vote. It is disheartening to think that his pressure can be strong enough to make the Attorney General act as he has acted.

The "Fascist" Test

WHEN the Peñaranda régime was overthrown in Bolivia some months ago, there was a hostile outcry in the "liberal" press of the United States. Here was simply another fascist coup on the model of, if not actually instigated by, Argentina. For had not General Peñaranda cooperated in producing tin and other vital material for the armament of the United Nations? There were some voices which pointed out that all was not well in Bolivia under the régime we had been supporting; THE COMMONWEAL itself had reported on the frightful conditions under which workers in the tin mines had to eke out a precarious existence. A few others spoke well of certain members of the new régime. But Peñaranda was our friend whom we received here with honor, and he was supplying us with stuff we needed; his enemies must be our enemies, foes of the United Nations, fascists like the colonels in nearby Argentina. So the argument went. Washington refused to recognize Major Villaroel's régime.

Meanwhile Bolivia has done everything possible to indicate that she is genuinely friendly to the United Nations. The new ruling junta was soon purged of all suspicious elements. The country was rid of Axis agents, including a number of native Bolivians and those married to Bolivians. There was progress in internal reform, which in fact had been the basic cause of the uprising. And finally Bolivian cooperation with the United Nations became even more wholehearted and effective than it was under the deposed Peñaranda.

July 2, the date set for the Bolivian election of a Constituent Assembly, has been drawing near. Therefore, withholding of recognition of the new Villaroel régime by the United States—and consequently by many of the Latin American countries who are our allies in this war—is tantamount to outright interference in the internal affairs of Bolivia. The Villaroel régime has been the *de facto* Bolivian government for six months now, and normally our recognition would have long since taken place.

It is gratifying to be able to report that at long last—probably before this issue of the magazine reaches the majority of its readers, and certainly before the coming Bolivian election—the United States and a number of the other American nations will take the necessary steps. And this *démarche* is said to be a result of pressure on the part of several friendly Latin American nations. It is high time. During a war it is easier than ever to rush to unwarranted conclusions. The Bolivian affair clearly demonstrates once more the danger of viewing political developments only in one's own terms, of trying to grasp a complex situation by slapping on a convenient if misleading label.

Price Control

A LAST-MINUTE compromise bill has been approved by the Senate and House joint conference committee trying to work out price control legislation. Probably this compromise bill will be passed by both houses of Congress. It is only slightly inflationary, and by and large represents a defeat for special interests seeking to profit from the present seller's market. Certainly it is far better than the Senate and House bills it replaces. Perhaps some of the procedural changes

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it includes will improve the administration of OPA, which has a good record considering how tricky and complex its task has been.

In a country as large and as diverse as the United States any attempt to hold down prices in a seller's market is staggeringly difficult. Fortunately a considerable sector of public opinion has gradually become convinced that such regulation is absolutely necessary if we are to avoid disastrous price inflation. Furthermore this sector of public opinion has come to understand the problems involved. Thus attempts in the present session to break down price control, both in the Senate and in the House, have aroused the angry protest of newspapers which certainly cannot be considered New Deal. The New York *Times* minced no words on the subject. It categorically described the bills submitted by the Senate and the House as making "a farce out of price control." One wonders whether similar bills a year ago would have elicited such strong objection. It seems likely that they would not have done so, and it is a tribute to the educational efforts—particularly of labor—that the present reaction should be what it is. A year ago special interests—particularly agricultural interests—would have had a far better chance to obtain the greedy concessions for which they so constantly clamor.

What we must now fear is that after the elections a certain public apathy may grow up on this subject, and the renewed demands of special interests may succeed in breaking down price control long before our economy can afford to do without it. Certainly we shall have to put up with the nuisance involved in any OPA for many months after hostilities cease—indeed until such time as the market ceases to be so overwhelmingly a seller's market, a market of scarcity. As long as our manufacturing industry is curtailed in supplying civilian wants either by the necessity to devote itself to war production or by the period of retooling, and as long as conditions elsewhere in the world offer a ready market to our farm production, we can only avoid a disastrous degree of inflation by keeping our prices as stable as we possibly can. We must constantly remember this as against the howls of business and agriculture. We must stop our ears to pleas that price control is "un-American," will "destroy free enterprise," etc. And we must hope that those directly interested in avoiding inflation—particularly labor—will continue to pound at the thesis that we must continue price control as long as we genuinely need it.

The Freedom of the Pope

CASUAL reading of the press since the capture of Rome must lead at least to one conclusion—that the Holy Father feels less constraint, infinitely less constraint, if any at all, under present arrangements than he has felt for many years. He is reported to be giving audiences to thousands of soldiers almost daily, and he has not hesitated to quit the territory of Vatican City. As we said in these columns many months ago, there can be no question of the Pope's preferring our atmosphere to the atmosphere of fascism or nazism. And this in itself is something which critics of the Vatican always overlook.

Elsewhere in this issue we quote several sentences from Harold Laski's latest book, brilliantly summarizing the feeling of many non-Catholics (and of a certain number of Catholics as well) that the Holy See has dealt far less harshly with the totalitarianism of the Right than it has with the totalitarianism of the Left. Certainly there has been ample ground for forming such an impression. Yet it is essential that the historical frame of reference for the Vatican's political attitudes of the last twenty-five years be kept in mind before one makes any judgment. The Bolshevik attack on religion was the first wholesale attack, the first attempt really to destroy Christianity in this century. It came as a tremendous shock. Furthermore there was no question of patriotism involved. There were no Catholics—indeed very few Christians of any sort—within the Soviet state who felt torn between their loyalty to their country and their loyalty to their Church.

When fascism and nazism came to power, they pleaded their hostility to godless atheism, to the "red peril." They won much support merely on the ground that they opposed a régime which was openly and blatantly anti-religious. They also appealed deeply to the national pride of the peoples they sought to govern. Hence patriotism was involved, and it was the duty of the Holy See to try to minimize the conflict between loyalty to the fatherland and loyalty to the church, so as not to force consciences too abruptly into an unbearable position. It would seem that the open hostility of the fascists and nazis to communist Russia, coupled with the very real problem of patriotism, constituted ample reason for the policy which the Holy See pursued. It consistently condemned the wrong principles involved in both of these new faiths, but sought to avoid the kind of total condemnation which was seldom avoided in the Russian instance. As Don Sturzo has well pointed out, this was the policy pursued by substantially everyone during those days—not by the Holy See alone.

These historical considerations by no means eliminate the disquieted feeling so well stated by Mr. Laski. We believe that events will do much to eliminate it. If Russia genuinely has a change of heart in its religious policy, that alone will greatly help. And it is always to be remembered that when Hitler tried to enlist Papal support for his anti-Bolshevik crusade, he got nowhere.

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Mexico and the War

Impacts on our southern neighbor

Harry Sylvester

IN VERA CRUZ, the pilots of the US Ferry Command sit around the sidewalk cafes on the Plaza and wait for the orders that will send them out over the Gulf of Mexico, often in crippled planes, going back to the States. One of them remembers that here in Vera Cruz fell the first bomb ever dropped from an airplane, and that it fell from an American plane in 1914. But now the city is a station in our Ferry Command. The pilots feel bad because they are not in the war zone, although their average risk is about equal to the average risk of fliers in the war zone. But they feel bad and are suspicious of all strangers, whom they feel are trying to get valuable information from them over the beer. This route of the Ferry Command has been published in at least two American magazines, but the pilots feel better if they try to guard it as a secret, and who can blame them, between the beer and the frustration. And then there is the one who knows about the first bomb falling there, where now we have a Ferry Command station, and he calls it a paradox, which it is, of course. But then the whole country is a paradox. . . .

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The thing one notices first in Mexico in these times is the seeming prosperity of the place, and the thing one notices second is how superficial that prosperity is. It is a prosperity that has benefited what is, even in theoretically socialist Mexico, the upper class. The middle class has been helped to some degree and the *peons* not at all. All one has to know to prove this is that food prices have gone up 100 percent since the US entered the war, compared to a rise of about 30 percent in the States. Food being still appreciably cheaper in Mexico than in the States means exactly nothing to the *peon,* whose increased wages have been made a mockery, for staples such as corn and beans have felt the inflation badly, whereas comparable staples in the US have not.

The inflation in Mexico is worse in Mexico city and in Monterrey than in any other place. These two cities are the ones most visited by foreigners. The foreigners cannot spend their money in the States and they can spend it in Mexico on things all but impossible to obtain in the States. The deadly lesson can be learned in these two Mexican cities, because inflation is hard to control in Mexico and because most visiting Americans will pay almost any price for fountain pens, Swiss watches, leather goods, etc., which they can obtain only with difficulty or not at all at home.

Nobody seems to know why most of the Swiss watches come to Mexico first, and many Americans cannot understand why American fountain pens, clocks, tractors and new automobiles can be bought in Mexico; in fact, almost anything but tires. Most of these are accounted for by the export allowance granted to American firms because the US said it would help support the Latin-American economy. The right-hand drive taxis that one sees are said to have come from Canada although no one seems to know quite why or how they get here.

It is impossible to get into a good hotel without a reservation and at times impossible to get in to any hotel whatsoever, with the possible exception of certain dumps. Mexican hotel owners are putting the squeeze on, and to live in a good hotel in Mexico now costs just about double what it did fifteen months ago. Nobody protests very strongly and the great ambition of most tourists seems to be to get into Ciro's and possibly be mistaken for one of the phonies of the international fast set, as decadent a bunch of degenerates, egomaniacs, warpies, weirds and just plain pretentious burblers as any European capital ever had.

There is more and more talk of revolution, although from what direction is obscure. Along with this talk there is a curious and paradoxical growth of order in Mexican life. The Sinarquists abide for the present by their non-violent tenets, although the vagueness of their program and their extreme nationalism provide cause for concern among our best observers there.

Perhaps the strangest recent occurrence was one that took place on February 6, when certain workers' syndicates met near the Zocalo, Mexico City's great plaza, to protest the inefficient administration of the Social Security Act. They met in spite of having been refused a permit, conducted their meeting in an orderly manner

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and then disbanded, completely without any manifestation of violence. There is involved here and in certain attendant happenings what seems almost a return to philosophical anarchy as distinguished from an anarchy of violence. Not only were the Mexican labor and government setups not yet ready for social security but the administrator of it, Ignacio Garcia Tellez, a politician, was not equipped to handle anything so complex. Recognizing this, some workmen went so far as actually to refuse their wages in protest.

In spite of inflation, which is acute only in the cities, the war has benefited Mexico a good deal. Not only does she supply certain things such as hennequin, mercury and mahogany, which the US cannot secure elsewhere without difficulty, but some industries, notably cotton textiles, have expanded beyond anyone's dreams. In 1940, Mexico exported 300,000 pesos worth of cotton textiles. When the war cut Mexico off from her two main markets for raw cotton, Germany and Japan, the textile mills started expanding and in 1943, Mexico exported 60,000,000 pesos worth of cotton goods.

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By way of contrast with the play-boys and play-girls from the States are the hard-working people of the US government units in Mexico. Before the war, the Embassy and affiliated units employed about 40 people, including the Ambassador. Now, including the economic unit, which has taken over the Hotel Imperial, the Embassy employs 850. Virtually all of them are professionals. George Messersmith, the ambassador, is a professional. He is not down here because he contributed 25 or 50 thousand dollars to someone's campaign fund, but because he has grown grey and broken his health representing the United States in Latin America.

One of the first things he did after coming down here was to insist that everyone connected with the Embassy speak Spanish, something that many of the Embassy people had overlooked in the good old days. He knows and respects Latin Americans, and appreciates the fact that Mexico is one of the most complicated countries in the world. He has become extraordinarily well-liked in his short time there, because of his frankness and because he doesn't try to kid anyone. It is solely through his good offices and those of some of his assistants such as Raleigh Gibson, the first secretary, that if in the future Texas and California planters need Mexican labor, they will get it.

It may do everyone concerned some good to stress this point. The blunt fact is that Mexico and Mexicans distinguish rather sharply between Texas and the rest of the United States. When Governor Coke Stevenson made his hurried tour of Mexico, emanating good-will from under a broad-brimmed hat, he kidded exactly no one. Mexico still resents—and bitterly—the discrimination practiced in Texas against Mexicans. She will send her *braceros* to work in Texas fields if Texas needs them while this war is on. But not because old Cokus came a-puffing down here to tell Mexico how we-all Texans just love you-all Mexicans. Mexico will send her farm-hands to Texas only because of her liking and respect for George Messersmith and his people of the Embassy. Let there be no doubt about it.

The result of the sincerity on the part of the United States and its representatives here is that a country which was a "sullen neighbor" in the last war has in this one become surprisingly cooperative. There has been, as in all countries, a certain amount of graft in connection with the war, because the Mexican, even more so than most people, is allergic to the effect of power once he has attained it. One rather unpleasant recent case involved a general who, for a consideration, falsified papers that would enable peons to obtain work on farms in the States. The papers were valueless; when the general got caught up with, he went into hiding, and the only way they could get him out was to charge him with desertion. He will be tried but the chances are against his being punished by much more than the proverbial slap on the wrist.

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Only 8 percent of the land in Mexico is arable and only 4 percent is under actual cultivation. There is a food shortage, not yet acute, and this is partly responsible for the food inflation. But it is due principally to two or three other factors. One is the breakdown of the transportation system, which is still not in very good order, because the US Railroad Mission—which has been doing wonders—can change road-beds but not people. A second reason is that, quite apart from legal, moral or ethical considerations, many of the people given land in the agrarian reforms were not yet ready to work their own land. A third reason stressed by some, although denied by the Economic Unit of our Embassy, is that Mexico is shipping large quantities of certain foodstuffs to the US, because of the higher prices paid by American buyers in Mexico.

In refutation of this last statement, the Embassy offers the following: the US is buying foodstuffs that Mexico could not use because of large surpluses or because of transportation difficulties. Two examples are *garbanzas* (chick-peas) and cattle. The principal market for the Mexican *garbanza* was Spain, now largely cut off by the war. The principal cattle-raising states in Mexico are the northwestern ones of Chihuahua

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and Sonora. Transportation south to Mexico City, Guadalajara and the heavily populated parts of Mexico is unusually difficult. There are only two single-track roads leading south from that region. That of the National Railroads runs into incredible bottle-necks at Irapuato and Tula, and cattle-cars are sometimes delayed so long that the animals are virtually dead by the time they reach Mexico City. The other road, a division of the Southern Pacific, has been under many difficulties lately due to coastal storms, as well as to discontented workmen and others burning the bridges of this line, which runs along the coast of the Gulf of California, so that trains have been held up from one to three days and operations have been suspended for periods of as much as six days while repairs were made.

Conversely, transportation to the States from northwestern Mexico is obviously simple, and often does not even require the use of the railroads. It is not unusual to see traffic held up on the International Bridges between El Paso and Juarez by herds of five hundred to a thousand cattle being driven across to the States.

Although food is high and various unrests are moving all over the country, the enrollment in the schools, both public and private, is the highest in history. There is a good deal of talk of revolution, and the time of the next revolt is variously estimated at from thirty days to five years. It will come from the Right, although from how far to the Right nobody can say. There is confusion and dissension in the ranks of the National Revolutionary Party, the official party of the government, and in December this became almost acute, although nothing of it reached even the Mexican papers.

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The way it happened was this: The Church in Mexico, sobered by the persecution of former years, has been making a strong comeback, not only in such obvious matters as building new churches and opening old ones, but in lending its weight to certain of the social reforms. For although the anti-religious laws still remain in the Mexican constitution, they have not been enforced by Camacho. The Church was going about its business, teaching, consoling and variously administering to the spiritual needs of a nation still better than 90 percent Catholic. Then the Church made an error in strategy.

Vicente Lombardo Toledano, the labor leader who is the rallying point of much of the anti-Church sentiment, in the words of a high official at the American Embassy, "was becoming the forgotten man." The Church made the tactical error of promoting two Eucharistic Congresses, one at Orizaba, another at Vera Cruz. This immediately dramatized the comeback the Church had made, and Toledano began to make speeches again. The former president, Lazaro Cardenas, now Secretary of National Defense, also began to bestir himself. A not inconsiderable factor in Mexican politics is a group of interested Americans, both of the Right and the Left, who whip up the anti-Church factions any time there is a hint of a let down. These people seem to hate the Church a good deal more than they love the Revolution, because evidence of the betrayal of the Revolution is all around them, every day.

It was partly due to pressure from the various anti-Church groups, partly due to the Church's mistake in dramatizing itself through Eucharistic Congresses, that Cardenas went to Camacho in December to tell him that he wanted the anti-religious laws enforced again. Camacho, with the backing of certain of the generals, defied him. The matter stands so now, a constant irritation and danger.

Avila Camacho is perhaps a good man to have in Mexico during this time of unrest and flux. He is reasonable and moderate in his policies, although he is trying to please too many factions, having been elected as a compromise candidate of the official party. He seems honest and is about as well-liked as any recent president. Like his two immediate predecessors, Cardenas and Madero, he has—the term is frequently used in quotes in Mexico—"a brother." All these presidents had "brothers." Which led an old revolutionary lawyer named Aquiles Elorduy, speaking at the convention last year of Accion Nacional, to say: "What this country needs is not a law forbidding the President to succeed himself, but a law against the President having a brother."

Of course, Elorduy could not possibly have been thinking of Maximino Camacho, the President's brother, when he said this. Poor old Maximino barely gets along, with a racing stable at the Hipodromo de las Americas and eight mansions, complete . . . in most of the principal cities and watering places of the country. And some folk are so unkind as to say that a foreigner cannot do business in Mexico any more without first having a talk with Maximino.

Maximino is not the only paradox in Mexico. At the Hipodromo there are "revolutionary" generals with racing stables, and the Left has gone into big and not always clean business just as joyously as the Right did when it was in power.

Accion Nacional is the current attempt to form an opposition party in Mexico. It is composed of a variety of people ranging from just left of Center to virtually the extreme Right. It includes many intellectuals, scholars, business men and politicians dissatisfied with various features of the official party. It publishes a weekly, *La Nacion,* well-edited and more or less of a thorn

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in the side of the Government. Many of its criticisms are sound and, indeed, no other group in Mexico can muster as much brain-power and experience. But the elements of the extreme Right manage to have a little too much to say in its policies and its comments are sometimes so hysterically anti-United States as to vitiate much that is constructive. As recently, when an editorial in *La Nacion* burbled that the destruction of the Abbey at Monte Cassino was the worst act of vandalism committed in this war.

Everyone associated with Accion Nacional is labeled fascist by the Leftists in Mexico, although it is composed of a wide variety of people and ideas, some of them former old revolutionaries become dissatisfied and disillusioned at the almost constant betrayal of the Revolution by those in power. If this group manages to find common ground with the potentially ominous Sinarquist movement, an opposition party strong enough to give the official party worry will have been formed.

One of the most obvious and terrible paradoxes in Mexico is that the NPM or official party, whose adherents constantly call all opposing movements fascist, has itself many fascist characteristics. Or perhaps it would be more accurate to say that the country, as run by the NPM, has many fascist characteristics. One is that there is only a single political party, the official one. Two is that there is still a theoretical, if at the moment not an actual, religious persecution. Three is that the country is governed by what could be called a revolving oligarchy. Presidents and other elected officials are forbidden by law to succeed themselves, but they circumvent this, once their term, say, as governor ends, by running perhaps for congress. Four, there is still much violence directly connected with politics. Recently the Governor of Sinaloa was murdered at a masked ball in Mazatlan, and there have been other sporadic incidents of violence directly connected with politics in Aguas Calientes, Pueblo and Vera Cruz as well. The fact that Mexico is not yet fascist is a matter of luck or divine providence.

The religious persecution has led to its paradoxes, too, the most obvious of which is the spectacle of the Mexican Army, theoretically fighting for the Four Freedoms, forbidden to have chaplains, and forbidden to appear in church in uniform. Lazaro Cardenas, as Secretary of National Defense, was responsible for putting these regulations into effect late last year. A day or two after they were promulgated, almost every paper in Mexico City published a picture of General Mark Clark attending Mass in Italy, missal in hand. One paper published a list of the great soldiers of all time who, because of their religion, could not have served in the Mexican Army as presently administered.

Despite the great increase in school enrollments, the private schools in Mexico, both religious and secular, are worried over the return of the communists to Mexican education. Under the former Secretary of Education, Octavio Vejar Vasquez, the comrades were either eased out of the department or limited to what would be their normal amount of influence in whatever their positions happened to be. Vasquez became very ill—his life was saved only by penicillin flown in from the US at the request of the Embassy—and he was forced to resign last December. He was succeeded by Jaime Torres Bodet, former undersecretary for Foreign Relations, an intellectual and a good writer. At about the same time the communists got control of the teachers union and Chavez Orozco, a comrade from way back, became its Secretary. Although Bodet is an adherent of neither extreme Left nor extreme Right, and is generally well-thought of, the communists took advantage of the change in office to recover some of the authority they had lost under Vasquez. If they begin to resort to some of their former methods, such as exaggerated sex instruction for children, they might well help to advance the time of the next revolt, for the average Mexican has an extraordinary concern about his children, and many instances of violence were set off during the 30's by this same propensity of some communist educators for excesses in the sex instruction of children.

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One of the most remarkable examples of Pan Americanism is that offered by the American Foundation School in Mexico City. Long before it became fashionable to be a Pan American, this school under Henry L. Cain, its director, and Paul V. Murray, its high school principal, was promulgating Pan Americanism through its mixed student body of Mexicans and Americans and its bilingual method of instruction, half the classes for a day being taught in English and half in Spanish. Murray had real reasons to believe in Pan Americanism. He is a Ph.D., a native Chicagoan who liked Mexico, married the grammarian, Elena Picazo, whose English-Spanish grammars have sold a hundred thousand copies in recent years, and is raising his daughters to talk both languages fluently. Cain and Murray have developed the school to the point where it was recently rated the best of the more than two hundred American schools in Latin America, and they are giving what some might call a practical example of how to get along in the post-war world, by enrolling 1,200 students from thirty countries.

Mexico, as these figures evidence, is one of the principal havens for refugees. Like the Americans there, they comprise all kinds of people, from the hedonists, who have merely transferred their sun-chasing from the French Riviera to Acapulco,

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to Spanish and French refugees who are biding their time. The "Free French" are active there, in Orizaba and small cities as well as in the capital, and many of the Frenchmen of the permanent and pre-war colony in Mexico have signed up as officers of the Committee of Liberation and are waiting daily for word that will summon them to North Africa. The permanent English colony has contributed, greatly out of proportion to its numbers, to the British war effort. Most of the Englishmen are too old to be much good in the Army, and their business has been hit by the transportation breakdown in Mexico, but they have been sending money and goods in a steady stream to England.

The joy-boys and joy-girls of the international fast set flit back and forth between the capital and Acapulco, giggling over Diego Rivera's dirty murals in Ciro's and trying to catch up with the next adultery, while the peon, gathering more and more in the little gem-like park of the Alameda, wonders why he is still hungry with the Party of Liberation in power and why he was brought to the capital to be sent to the United States as a *bracero* and was not sent. He is wondering why his wages, increased to four pesos a day, buys no more than when he was getting two pesos a day, and he is wondering how it is the revolutionary generals have racing stables. And the moderates, the Centrists, the people who like neither the Right nor the Left are in amazement noticing that more and more they are being forced to go to one extreme or the other. The NPM is divided, and the new Indian recruits wonder why they are not allowed to go to church. Governors get murdered and the Sinarquists are still sullenly non-violent. Toledano still spouts publicly against the Church and privately sends his daughters to a convent school. Some of the opposition is talking about Brito Foucher as a presidential candidate, and the communists call him fascist. Many people remember ten years ago, when he led an armed expedition of university students into Tabasco and broke the rule of the dictator, Garido Canabal. Foucher, the Rector of the University and the author of many educational reforms there, is the sole legendary figure left in Mexico today. He holds honorary degrees from the University of New Mexico and Boston University, and is largely responsible for the University's having 23,000 students. More and more, though not publicly, he emerges as a possible opposition candidate for the Presidency in 1946. His friends call him conservative, his enemies reactionary, but no one denies his intelligence, his ability and his power to rally people around him. He has chosen to do this only once in his life, when he led the students to break the religious persecution in Tabasco. There is no certainty that he wants to run for the presidency, and he has given no evidence that he cares to employ violence for any other purpose than that which he employed it for ten years ago. But he is a man to watch, because he is the only intellectual in Mexico who is at once not soured against the US and is a rallying point for the opposition party.

The Fugitives

A literary post-mortem

Oliver W. Evans

IT IS POLITE, in speaking of extinct literary movements, to say that they are gone but not forgotten; there is some embarrassment, however, about extending this courtesy to the Fugitives, who appear to be forgotten but not gone. They are forgotten, that is, in the sense that they are no longer thought of as Fugitives, but as separate and independent identities. All the important members of the original group are still very much alive; some of them, indeed, are relatively young men. They continue, as individuals, to write and to be read, though, to be sure, most of them seem to have turned from poetry to prose. Thus, one of them publishes, from time to time, a volume of criticism so scholarly and "cerebral" in the best Fugitive tradition that many reviewers are frankly afraid to tackle it; another has turned to novel-writing with rather unexpected popular success; another has recently been appointed to a responsible post in the Library of Congress, and continues his contributions, chiefly in the form of criticism, to the socio-literary weeklies. But the Fugitive movement itself is a thing of the past. It is now remembered, if it is remembered at all, as a failure—not as an important failure, for it was never a really important movement—but as one of the minor literary failures of America.

The Fugitives never professed a specific esthetic program. By refusing to acknowledge a formal credo, such as the Imagists had done, they evaded

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from the beginning the responsibility of a definite verbal commitment. Even the name *Fugitive*, which they gave to their publication, is itself a mystery, and none of the original members ever explained what it was they were fleeing from. Readers were left to draw their own conclusions as to what the Fugitives were up to. This they were not long in doing, for, as Babette Deutsch has recently pointed out, even if no one knew what the Fugitives were fleeing from, it soon became apparent what they were fleeing *to*: this was a *tour d'ivoire* such as even Rimbaud never conceived, a tower that was to be a symbol for social as well as literary isolation.

It is impossible to think of the Fugitives and their magazine without thinking of Vanderbilt University, and this is very significant. The academic tone was present from the first, revealing itself in the classical formalism of Fugitive verse and in the scholarly authority of its criticism—the latter proving a surprisingly effective bluff on occasion. The two most prominent of the early Fugitives, John Crowe Ransom (who is properly regarded as the father of the movement) and Donald Davidson, were both serving on the faculty when the group first organized. Allen Tate, the youngest of the original members, was then a senior in the University, where he received his degree *magna cum laude* in 1922. Ransom, a few years earlier, had had a brilliant career as a Rhodes scholar at Oxford. These men were all first-rate scholars: the libraries of certain well-to-do Southern families, acquired in colonial times and added to little by little by subsequent generations, succeeded in producing a brand of scholar which was easily the equal of the New England variety. From families such as these came the early Fugitives, and they all attended Vanderbilt, which was then, as it is now, as proudly autocratic a little citadel of humanistic culture as anything in the East. Ransom, Davidson, and Tate were scholars first, and poets afterwards. It is revealing to read in their anthology ("Fugitives," Harcourt, 1928, p. iii), that they held their meetings in each others' homes "where they talked about poetry and philosophy. In the autumn of 1921 they became interested in the writing of poetry." Just like that!

There was something else, too. Nashville, clinging desperately and a little pathetically to its aristocratic traditions of a feudalistic Southland, made a perfect setting for a movement in the direction which the Fugitives were presently to take. The early Fugitives came from the "old families" of the middle South, and were in violent opposition to the changes they saw taking place about them. Industrialism had come to the South, and a new class was rising, a class whose criterion of prestige was no longer family, but money. The "poor whites" were coming into their own, and were insolently elbowing out of the way those whom they had formerly acknowledged as their betters. These sensitive young men, the Fugitives, looked upon the contemporary scene with very natural alarm, turned their imaginations longingly toward the past, and leaned more heavily than ever upon their traditions. They recognized in the machine a symbol of the forces which were combining to make them increasingly uncomfortable. This was the real motivation behind the Agrarian movement, which advocated the return to an agricultural South, and it explains the curious relationship, never sufficiently clarified, between the Fugitives and the agrarians. It explains the paradox of a scholar-sophisticate such as Ransom, fresh from the halls of Christ Church, Oxford, clamoring for a plough and team of mules. The Fugitives were seeking a justification in sociology for a system which would afford them the security and prestige for which they yearned, and it cannot be denied that they sometimes made themselves a little ridiculous in so doing.

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Social snobbery was thus added to intellectual snobbery, the ivory tower was nearing perfection. The Fugitives had for their ideal the scholar-gentleman, who now and then worked off a poem in the seclusion of his study. How entirely avocational the art of versifying was with these university professors and their well-to-do friends may be inferred from the fact that they published their first poems using such fanciful names as "Roger Prim," "Henry Feathertop" and "Robin Gallivant": just the sort of whimsical thing one might expect of gentlemen of leisure. Mythological allusions, an occasional Latin phrase, an unusual French form—anything which might be taken as evidence of the author's erudition was welcomed. Typical titles read "Corymba," "Avalon," "Redivivus," "Judith of Bethulia," "Ignis Fatuus," "Primavera," "Pro Sua Vita." Needless to say, the *Fugitive* was never bothered with financial worries; it received generous backing from various wealthy Nashville families, such as the Cheeks.

The poems themselves were precious, and, for the most part, of a derivative character. The most obvious influences were the Elizabethans; the so-called metaphysicial poets of the seventeenth century; and the French Symbolists, together with their American exponents, T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pound. Not for the ordinary man, these poems! What was Sweeney (or Mr. Cheek, either, for that matter) to make of Ransom's

> Cold words came down spiral from the head,
> Gray doves from the official tower illsped.

or Davidson's

> An old candescent moment, lost
> In a tasteless regimen,

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With sudden starry pentecost . . .
The maddening sistrum shaken
For Iris' warm commune,
Seen arms lifted, bosoms bared
In far other rigadoon.

or Tate's

The bleak sunshine shrieks its chipped music . . .
He who dribbled couplets like a snake,
Coiled to a lithe precision in the sun . . .
Her touseled eyes no longer rinse the haze
Of winter sprawled like a carcass by the door.

The strongest influence of all was Eliot's. Thus, Davidson's "Corymba" is scarcely more than an adaptation of the Grishkin poem, though vastly inferior to the original. There are numerous instances of specific borrowings, some of the most striking of which have been pointed out by Miss Deutsch (compare Eliot's "Of dowager Mrs. Phlaccus, and Professor and Mrs. Cheetah/I remember a slice of lemon, and a bitten macaroon" with Ransom's "A macaroon absorbed all her emotion," where, to be sure, the similarity does not consist merely in the use of the word "macaroon," but in its use by both poets as a symbol for the trivial); what is even more significant, however, is that the poets took over Eliot's attitude toward modern life hook, line and sinker. Eliot-worship, of course, was fashionable at the time—no young man could altogether escape his influence—but for the Fugitives he had a very particular appeal, for Eliot, too, was dissatisfied with the present, looked with undisguised contempt upon the working man, and longed nostalgically for an aristocratic past. Eliot, on his part, was quick to acknowledge the Fugitives as his disciples, and in the columns of the *Criterion* caused them to receive almost unstinted praise. The Fugitives were never popular poets—that was the last thing they would have wished to be—but for slightly less than a decade they were discussed and quoted in the more advanced literary circles of England and America. They enjoyed considerable prestige in a period whose critical sense had been blinded to the distinction between necessary and unnecessary obscurity, a period in which innumerable frauds were committed in the name of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.

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Only in Ransom was the obscurity in any way organic, essential to the real meaning of the poem. He is lacking in the syntactical violences, the overconscious images, the tortured involutions of Tate and Davidson. The difficulties of his verse are chiefly difficulties of vocabulary, and they are inevitable for the ironic effects which he knows how to produce so successfully: "transmogrifying bee," "Sweet ladies, long may ye prosper / And toughly I hope ye may thole." There is no mistaking the fact that Ransom is a good poet, but he is also a dangerously limited one. He is a far more brilliant and sensitive ironist than Eliot, but on the positive side his work leaves much to be desired. His poetry is that of a learned sophisticate who enjoys experimenting, always a little whimsically, with the flavor of quaint and obsolete words, words gathered from the foot-notes of a scholar's dictionary, for the sake of a total ironic effect. He is not even a poet's poet: he is a philologist's poet. Of all the Fugitives, however, he is certainly the most gifted poetically. He is the only one of them who has successfully absorbed his influences, who has managed to maintain his poetical identity. This is the more remarkable in that his influences are so numerous and so obvious: there are lines that one would almost swear no one but Donne could have written, others that have the authentic ring of the early English ballads, others that identically reproduce the brittle disillusionment of T. S. Eliot—yet Random uses these so diverse idioms with perfect detachment, slipping easily and impartially from one to the other, always remaining on the outside, always himself, the scholar-gentleman, Tennessee variety.

As time went on, other poets joined the Fugitive group. They, too, were scholars for the most part, scholars and teachers. There was Robert Penn Warren, alumnus first of Vanderbilt and Yale, then of Oxford, where he followed as a Rhodes scholar in Ransom's wake. Then there was Walter Clyde Curry, who is today one of the world's recognized Chaucer authorities. Poetry was avocational with Merrill Moore, too, who was preparing himself at the Vanderbilt School of Medicine for a highly successful career as a psychiatrist. He turned out sonnets in his idle moments, then as now, with the ease of a Woolworth employee wrapping up a package. The iridescent Laura Riding (now regarded by the others as a traitress) was, of course, an exception, here as everywhere. Warren had the greatest natural talent of the younger group, and it is highly unfortunate for his career as a poet that the accidents of birth and environment caused this talent to be developed within the Fugitive tower. His early poems are very much worth reading, and even in some of the later ones, amid a wilderness of indirections, one occasionally stumbles upon a sincere and passionate image.

The dark and swollen orchid of this sorrow.

The Fugitives did not limit themselves to poetry. They also attempted biography and criticism. Tate's first volume was a biography of Stonewall Jackson, followed, a year later, by one of Jefferson Davis; and Warren published his "John Brown, the Making of a Martyr" six years before the appearance of his first book of verse. In criticism they were especially active. Here

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their scholastic accomplishments proved a particularly formidable weapon, and they quickly gained a reputation for acuteness and penetration which still persists. Only very recently have writers like Alfred Kazin ventured to tackle Fugitive criticism, objecting that it reduces poetry to a game, to a mere exercise in technical strategy.

In the last analysis, however, the Fugitives have been more succesful as critics than as poets. Ransom, in spite of his finicky tastes, which make it necessary for him to apologize for Shakespeare's poetry on the ground that he was "not an aristocrat, did not go to the university," has made a real impact on the contemporary critical consciousness. Tate's talent is nothing if not critical; the vast majority of his verse is quite unintelligible, representing in its excesses the logical culmination of the Fugitive movement in utter bathos and sterility. Perhaps the most competent critic of them all is Cleanth Brooks, the youngest of the entire group, also (the pattern is amazingly homogeneous) a Vanderbilt man and Rhodes scholar, whose "Modern Poetry and the Tradition" is an honest and unostentatious attempt to define the relation between the best of traditional poetry and the best of our own time. He starts from much the same premises, however, as Ransom and Tate, and of him, as of Warren, it can be said that his beginnings were unfortunate for the development of his best talents. Lately his interests seems to have turned increasingly to the past; his edition, in collaboration with a distinguished British savant, of Bishop Percy's letters is one of the finest contributions to literary scholarship in recent years.

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It is significant that the Fugitives have almost abandoned the writing of poetry. In their career they describe the cycle beginning with preciosity and continuing, through obscurity and incoherence, to absolute uncommunicability and silence. The attempts which Tate and Warren occasionally make to break that silence, the former prompted by a natural assertiveness out of all proportion to his talents, and the latter by a misplaced sense of loyalty, have been conspicuously unsuccessful. On the whole, the indulgence of those tendencies which the Fugitives exemplified in their poetry has resulted in leaving them virtually tongue-tied, a fact which condemns those tendencies more effectively than any amount of external criticism. Allen Tate, who recently declined to contribute to an anthology of modern war verse, stating, in the *New Republic,* his objections to poetry of this type, is at the moment the most stubborn defender of the Fugitive tower philosophy. His latest contribution to the world of letters, be it noted, is a new translation of the Latin "Pervigilium Veneris."

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The failure of the Fugitives, then, as poets, was inevitable, for the causes lay within the very nature of their ideal. This is not to say that their influence was in every way harmful to the development of American poetry; for, following Eliot's example, they did assist in giving certain structural properties to the peculiar bonelessness of post-Imagistic poetry, and their capacity for close textual analysis was a valuable antidote against the loose impressionism of criticism in the early twenties. The Fugitives failed, and they deserved to fail, but in attempting to avoid the causes of their failure it is still possible to go too far in the opposite direction. The tower is a poor resort at best, but the street has perils of its own.

Communications

IT ALL GOES TOGETHER

Cambridge, Mass.

TO the Editors: The review of the Eric Gill volume "It All Goes Together" (June 16, 1944) seems to have confused Dr. Ananda Coomaraswamy's first name. *He* wrote a remarkable and penetrating "Introduction" which might have been noticed at greater length, since it "diagnoses" with great wisdom and clarity the "modern" conditions that have made (and ever increasingly so) for the decay and "death" of craftsmanship.

It seems to us to be not so much a question of "the defense of man's inherent sacredness" but of a "defense," an "annunciation" of the higher, superior Principle, Who is the Architect and Craftsman of the cosmos ("the great order"), the End and Peace of the Universal Man.

Surprisingly, no mention was made of the numerous plates at the end of the volume illustrating Gill's versatile and dedicated genius.

LESTER KANEFSKY.

EDITORS' NOTE: *The unhappy error in Dr. Coomaraswamy's sex is entirely to be blamed on the carelessness of the editors, not the reviewer.*

SINARQUISM

Milwaukee, Wis.

TO the Editors: Your article on Sinarquism (June 9) is a curious mixture of truth (about 80 percent), half-truths (10 percent) and untrue statements (10 percent), from which some very curious conclusions and fears are developed.

You cite as your principal source the pamphlet "Mexico in 1960," which you state will soon be brought out in a large English edition. This pamphlet was the "pipe-dream" of one of their youthful leaders and only a few hundred copies got out. The administrative board of counsellors then suppressed same and later established a sort of censorship to prevent similar happenings. However, this "non-official" booklet has been much quoted by enemies of the movement. When I was in Mexico last April I had to actually beg for a copy which was finally given me with a proper disavowal and admonition.

I could write a five-page letter refuting some of the untrue statements in your article, but such a letter would never be printed by you. I feel however that I must challenge the statement that after the attempted asassination of President Avila Camacho the Chiefs of Sinarquism met and inscribed the assassin's name in their list of martyrs and denounced the President. This is so contrary to their consistently maintained doctrine of non-violence that I challenge you to prove the point and disclose the source of your "private advice"—or do you claim the right to operate "secretly"? The April and May numbers of *El Sinarquista* carried articles of absolutely different tone and in my conversation with high Sinarquista chiefs I heard only denunciations of the attempted assassination and very sincere expressions of esteem for the President. It is true that other members of his government do not share in that respect and good will.

Despite the very fine things that have been accomplished by the Sinarquists and the laudable aims, which you acknowledge, you needlessly fear what might become of the movement in the future. "If Sinarquists succeed in growing considerably more in numbers, there is a real danger of a bloody civil war"—let me say that it will not be incited by the Sinarquistas. But in order to secure their rights as citizens and even as human beings, now so outrageously denied them by the "revolutionary politicians," many hundreds more of Sinarquista martyrs will willingly sacrifice their lives without striking back. Thus they will gain the attention not only of their fellow-citizens, but of the whole world and help achieve a true democracy in their country without the greater bloodshed of a revolution.

"The idea of violence recurs again and again in the speeches and publications of the movement" is a very misleading statement. Through the condemnation by the Sinarquistas of strife and revolution and their insistence that the members must in no way provoke or take part in any violence and must go absolutely unarmed, they have in reality prevented several revolutions in Mexico from breaking out. Many of their members have been threatened, beaten up, jailed, and over a hundred have been killed, but none ever raised a hand, even in self-defense. When they speak of violence and bloodshed they are only truthfully preparing their members for what they will receive from their enemies for belonging to the movement.

While you acknowledge the necessity of the "secret leadership" remaining incognito because of the great personal risks involved, you seem unwilling to accept the appraisal of these leaders by even your personal friends who have met them and regard them as unselfish men of high ideals, and you conjure up the prospect of a fascist development even though these leaders have consistently denied that they ever intend to take possession of the government. You object to their centralized, hierarchical organization and the obedience they exact of their members, who are forbidden to vote or debate in their local assemblies. Thereby you demonstrate that you are not acquainted with the realities of Mexican politics. Certainly you do not propose that the twenty members in some local ranch will help democracy by debating and then deciding by vote that (for instance) "the effective suffrage" is a

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farce in Mexico, and how to secure it. These illiterates certainly would get further along on the road to democracy by listening to some of the articles in *El Sinarquista* as read to them by perhaps the only one of their group who can read. I suggest that you spend a month in rural Mexico and learn that you are not dealing with the inhabitants of Vermont. Certainly it is better to have an intelligent board of counsellors who will keep a movement like this in check and prevent it from becoming either the start of a revolution or of being captured by a "caudillo." You might also have pointed out that if any Sinarquista comes to disagree with their program he may drop out of the movement without being persecuted as "fellow-travelers" even are when they quit other organizations.

You state that Sinarquism by its own achievement of power will inevitably introduce the virus of corruption. If you knew Mexico better, you would apply this observation to the Revolutionary Party now in power, and then as the best means of removing this incubus from the oppressed masses, you would recognize and advocate the most feasible remedy that has appeared, namely the civic, educational and non-military movement of Sinarquism.

FRANK GROSS, JR.

Space does not permit us to answer most of the points raised in Mr. Gross's letter here, but in a week or two these questions will be discussed in these columns at some length. In passing, we should like to point out that it is a common practice for movements to disavow things they have published—such as "Mexico in 1960"—when such publications are found to arouse uncomfortable reactions. Also that Mr. Gross's assumption that illiteracy inevitably means inability to discuss any question with intelligence simply does not stand the test of experience. Such a contention on the part of an apologist for Sinarquism lends added weight to the fears expressed in "A Note on Sinarquism."

—THE EDITORS.

The Stage & Screen

Broken Hearts of Broadway

IT WOULD BE interesting to know something about the Central Opera House way up east on Sixty-Seventh Street. Why it is called "Central" for instance. Built straight up and down, in the middle of a block, the place is surprising; and one climbs into one or other of its gigantic cage-elevators to spend a good part of the evening reaching the roof, meantime speculating about the mysteries of the building. On top, the New York Music Hall is at present holding forth in a small slice of period melodrama to the tune of much tweedledum furnished by a male quartet, and the rattle of crockery, beer mugs and various yoo-hoo furnished by an obliging house. Architecturally, I should say the whole project is intriguing, and a number of the plays achieve style in their individual parts; however, it is unfortunate that the play chosen for display is not an absorbing one and has been merely slung on the small stage, without any presentation at all. I estimate the two essentials for this kind of affair—where the audience is scattered at tables and often rather more interested in its own pursuits—to be acoustics and some (any) relentless method of lighting. Although tiny, the stage here appeared to me to be built up enough to provide visibility, but it was not jewelled at the end of the enormous hall as it should have been and I had the feeling that the distant people were not being reached. Also, the divertissement—songs and turns—seemed rather unplanned: the whole attack inexact, amateur, when it should have been formal and very neat. Poor direction. Nevertheless, I am glad to add that I had a pleasant time and would like to mention Bibi Osterwald, Margaret Linskie, Natalie Hammond Core, and Steve Cochran with gratitude. The employment of Brian O'Mara as Master of Ceremonies was a little astonishing, I think. Although possibly endearing, his determined shyness is not a qualification for this job. (*At the Central Opera House.*)

For Keeps

IN A WEEK of no wonders, Gilbert Miller's offering at least reestablishes the fact that the number of competent, even excellent, young actors on the street is steadily increasingly. Certainly the season has been notable chiefly for the work of those professionals of twenty-five years and younger, and it is no chore to add the names of Patricia Kirkland and Donald Murphy to my watch-list of Clift, Hugo, Hare, Terry Holmes and the remarkable Pamela Rivers. F. Hugh Herbert's comedy is an indifferent one. Dealing with the problem of an adolescent daughter of divorced parents, both of whom are minor celebrities, the piece is neither moving nor intellectually provocative, presenting mainly a number of repetitious episodes. However, holding all of the stage most of the time, I found Miss Kirkland most interesting and various to watch, and her command in this first big job exceptional. It seemed evident that she was working from a vantage of her own and for this reason it seemed to me that her make-up and certain of her smaller gestures stressed rather too much of the neurotic elements in the part—a stress which was not vindicated by the ensuing lines and situations of the play, although undoubtedly it would have emerged as a

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more honest and important vehicle had these qualities been wholly examined. The actress is, in other words, somewhat bigger than the character she plays, but I feel that this augmentation was prompted by a more astute conception than the playwright's. As the boy of the piece, Mr. Murphy's clarity and simplicity were wholly effective, a triumph over his physical make-up which is sophisticated and romantic, to say the least. Neither Frank Conroy's heavy-handed rather scornful playing of the Father, nor Ellen Mahar's excellent if intermittent Maid could deliver the evening to the adults. (*At the Henry Miller.*)

Take a Bow

THERE is exactly nothing to be said for this dull, dirty, dreary vaudeville show. (*At the Broadhurst.*)

KAPPO PHELAN.

Men Are Such Beasts

IT IS obvious that when Jules Levey decided to make a film production of *"The Hairy Ape,"* he paid no attention to the stage directions that accompanied Eugene O'Neill's original play; for the film's downfall is due mainly to his disregard of O'Neill's warning that by no means should any of the scenes be naturalistic. The picture starts out in Lisbon, in the present, with a bar-room brawl that is pretty much like the brawls we've seen in many a movie—complete with slugging, chairs flying through the air, comic touches, and finishing with the police rushing to the wrecked place. Then we follow the course of events on the *Amerigo,* a freighter that really looks like a freighter and with a stokehole that is exactly like the real thing. The last part of the film takes place in New York, and while the sets wouldn't fool anyone into thinking they *are* New York, at least they are meant to portray the city. Mildred's apartment, by the way, can only be described by "modernistical"; with its spaces, large windows and décor, it looks more like the members' lounge at the Museum of Modern Art than like any apartment you or I have ever been in.

But O'Neill's explicit set directions were not the only thing that Levey ignored. He completely thrust aside the play's symbolism which was its core and whole meaning. The original was not only full of social consciousness, class war, IWW and such, but it was also heavy with symbols of the machine age, hypocrisy, the romantic past, the realistic present. Its central figure, a Neanderthal hulk who confused himself with steel and steam and smoke, thought it was he and his stoking that made the ship run; and when he felt himself insulted by a white-dressed, wealthy social worker, he set out to get revenge on this anemic woman and her class. He soon learned that no one paid any attention to him and he did not "belong" anywhere. In the symbolic end he was crushed by a gorilla. Perhaps much of O'Neill's symbolism would seem dated if it were to appear now, but in any case the slight story running through this play was never meant to stand by itself. And Levey concentrates on plot.

Scriptwriters Robert D. Andrews and Decla Dunning have built up the rôle of Mildred (who appears in only two scenes of the play) to give it almost as great importance as that of Hank (called Yank in the original). Many new characters were added, but principally there is the ship's second engineer (played by John Loder) who spurns Mildred's high-minded friend (Dorothy Comingore) for the more flashy, sexy and insincere Mildred. She does him dirt of course. In fact Mildred is interested only in herself, and with her millions she is able to hurt many people. Susan Hayward plays the rôle as the scriptwriters wrote it and as the director no doubt insisted. But Mildred is made such a thoroughly mean person that her insults to Hank or anyone else carry little weight. That her kindly, thoughtful friend would have bothered with her for all these years and that the engineer would have been deceived by her is childish nonsense. This film's Mildred would have no friends, male or female; furthermore she doesn't even succeed in arousing an audience's interest. She does rate a giggle however in the sequence showing her taking a bubble bath in that absurd Hollywoodian penthouse. That this neurotic nymphomaniac could have upset our hairy-chested, coal-grimed stoker is also ridiculous. William Bendix succeeds at time in making us believe in Hank, the self-made god of the stokehole, but his chest thumping and ritualistic shouts of "Feed 'em! Feed 'em" as coal is shoveled into the furnaces are too melodramatic. We almost expect this ape man to swing from the rafters. His big scene with Mildred in the penthouse has a fishy smell of "King Kong." In certain scenes, however, such as when he is thrown into jail or when he is deriding his fellow stokers, Bendix makes Hank a vital personality that rises above the film's fumbling story about a man's loss and recapture of self-confidence.

I'm afraid Director Alfred Santell was not helpful in bringing order to the film. The confused script, the attempts at realism plus a few remnants of O'Neill's symbolism could not have been saved by either good direction or acting. But if this first (and most likely, last) filming of "The Hairy Ape" at least leads audiences to read Eugene O'Neill's original piece, the picture will have accomplished one very good thing.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

Editors' Choice

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AMERICA AND TWO WARS. *Dexter Perkins. Little.* $2.00.

Over-Proving His Case

MR. LASKI has been one of the Voices of the past twenty years. His life has been devoted to social criticism, in a marxist direction, and hence, in practical matters, to the British Labor Party's left wing. Since everything that he says is beautifully said and is based upon some degree of reality, he cannot be overlooked if we would understand our times and their uprootedness. In his latest brief essay Mr. Laski defends a simple thesis. He insists that society must be based upon a common faith, that without such a basis, it becomes frustrated and falls apart. He points to the part played by Christianity in supplying a new faith to the men of a disintegrating

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classical culture; he feels that our own day of disintegration requires a similar renewal; he finds the spirit of this renewal in the Russian Revolution.

"Faith, Reason and Civilization" rightly emphasizes the importance of turning the victory after this war into a positive thing, rather than letting ourselves sink back into any attempt to recreate what is dead—which is what we did after the last war. Liberal capitalism, the "acquisitive society," is dead because it cannot satisfy the aspirations of the masses of men, and Christianity no longer serves to keep the poor contented in their poverty as being the best guarantee of salvation. The poor, with modern technical progress, want a heavenly Jerusalem built in "England's green and pleasant land"—as Laski aptly quotes Blake. Pie in the sky is no pie at all.

There is no gainsaying much of what Mr. Laski points out. His analysis is often brilliant. He is particularly good when he deals with the fruitlessness of contemporary intellectual leadership. In discussing James Joyce's "Ulysses," for instance, he says: "It is not merely . . . that the day in the life of Leopold Bloom is a mass of obscene frustration; what is still more important is the fact that making the stream of consciousness in Bloom a complete universe in which the objective facts of existence and their relations have no reality save as ideas which Bloom experiences, Joyce pushes the individualism of contemporary culture to a point where it is drained of all social meaning. . . . The mind of the individual . . . has reduced the whole universe to a mood in its subconscious, and, in the very process of that reduction, it has destroyed the universe."

In his criticism of contemporary social phenomena, Laski also very astutely states the thorny problems we must grasp. What he has to say about the Papacy, for example, poses a problem which every Catholic has to face. It is not in the least a problem of faith; it is a very real problem in politics. "If it is unfair to say that the Papacy has been the ally of the dictators; it is, I think, true to say that its hostility has been formal and passive rather than active and determined. It has treated Hitler with a patience and a magnanimity which are in striking contrast with the fury of the attack it has fostered against Soviet Russia." (See our editorial elsewhere in this issue.)

But it is in Mr. Laski's central thesis that one detects the major flaw which vitiates his whole approach. It is undoubtedly true—a great Pope himself affirmed it—that the Church in particular and Christianity in general has lost much of its ancient influence with the working classes. And it is equally true that one of the principal reasons for this has been the perfectly human and natural tendency for churchmen to belie the principles of Christianity by coming to terms with the world, with money, with the materialism they so loudly excoriate from their pulpits. But if this criticism be admitted, have we any ground for supposing that the spirit of the Russian Revolution will not itself come to terms with the mammon of iniquity? It begins to look as though precisely this had happened, with Earl Browder now alleged to have a table permanently reserved at the Twelfth Street and Fifth Avenue Longchamps—if one may be allowed to erect so trivial a matter into a symbol.

To Mr. Laski the spirit of the Russian Revolution is a spirit which he admits is not alien to at least one aspect of the Christian spirit. It is based upon a firm faith in the brotherhood of men and in their equal right to maximum development of their potentialities, without that develop-

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ment's being hindered, far less frustrated, by greed or power. Supposing one were to grant that this is indeed the *spirit of the Russian Revolution;* have we any right so totally to disembody the spirit from its actual record in history? Of course Mr. Laski covers himself by speaking of the price of that revolution, but that is not enough. For if we allow him to remove the spirit of the revolution so thoroughly from its historic context, then we have every right to claim an equal privilege for the spirit of Christianity. Mr. Laski tries to defend himself against this by constantly reiterating the impossibility of accepting any Christian theology in the light of modern historical criticism. But if we accept such a light, have we any right to cling even to the most purified dialectical materialism?

What Mr. Laski does, indeed, is to state again the central problem of our time—the need for a unifying faith—but he does not do a very satisfactory job of discovering to us a faith which can accomplish what he wants, any more than he does a convincing job in his refusal of the spirit of Christianity and of Christian theology, which he finds so wholly unacceptable.

End of Isolation

HOW DID the United States manage to get into two world wars within twenty-five years against the will of a people, which, more than any other, wanted to be left alone to enjoy modern material benefits? In 1917 we insisted on our sovereign right of shipping contraband to the Allies, for whom propaganda (from only one side) had whipped a natural preference into lively sympathy; in 1941 we were attacked after proving ourselves unyielding against Japanese ambitions in the Orient. In both cases we wanted to stay out, despite our sympathies. And even as late as 1937, as Professor Perkins reminds us in "America and Two Wars," Congress passed and President Roosevelt signed a neutrality act designed to prevent any provocation leading to our involvement.

As late as the 1940 presidential campaign, although Professor Perkins fails to come anywhere near to emphasizing this fact sufficiently, both candidates vied with each other in promising American abstention. A year later we were in. And now the American people are more determined than ever about not going to war again. The difference is that a great many more of us realize that the only way to do this is to prevent war itself. The author expresses personal preference for a gradual building up of international institutions rather than an imposition of a world organization based on all-out blueprints. The danger in a gradualistic approach to international political organization is that the nations—once the immediate threat of war is past—will not get farther than the first few steps. But his little history deals primarily with our past.

His popularization is good in showing how our foreign policy from Versailles onward helped Japan. So, too, his diagnosis of the fundamental weakness of the League—the common diagnosis. He repeats the canard that Norman Angell's "The Great Illusion" (1910) sought to demonstrate the impossibility, as well as the futility, of a war, and curiously designates Jan Smuts as a liberal of the Wilsonian stamp. What he has to say is not particularly penetrating or original, but it serves as a useful summary of our foreign relations since 1898. The author's ideas for the post-war period, if he is not very specific as to how they could be realized, are moderate, humane and genuinely reasonable.

More Books of the Week

Presidential Agent. Upton Sinclair. Viking. $3.00.

JUST WHY, after some thirty years of writing, Upton Sinclair should have struck pay dirt is a mystery. This book is the fifth of a series which has given Mr. Sinclair a prominence, and, I daresay, an income hitherto unenjoyed. But why this should be I cannot tell. Perhaps it is because a man who for years was a crusader has now entered a world even more incredible.

For in many ways "Presidential Agent" is the most unbelievable, absurd book I have ever read. It is absurd because Lanny Budd, this "liberal" son of a munitions maker is, like God, omnipresent. He is present at Goering's shooting box, is in his home, is a friend of Magda Goebbels, knows Hitler, and is a friend of Leon Blum. He is a friend to leaders of the underground, and is secretly married to one of its members. There is no one in the political, and few in the social, life of the Europe of 1937 whom he does not know, and no one whom he cannot see. There is no secret to which he is not privy, and no event (now known to us) which he does not foresee. He moves with grace, charm, intelligence, wealth and restraint, like a Dumas character, among the great, the near-great, the believing and the unprincipled. His arrivals are as magic and as sudden as those of Mrs. Poppins. This may cause you some concern—but he even writes one of Mr. Roosevelt's speeches. This is superman in 655 pages.

But like the man in the Jesuit's explanation of free will and foreknowledge, he is unable to modify or stop the war he sees forthcoming. That is almost his only limitation.

Introduced, by a friend, to President Roosevelt, he becomes, as the title indicates, Mr. Roosevelt's secret agent. This gives to Mr. Sinclair an occasion to get inside the President's mind, and to give us some guessed-at examples of Mr. Roosevelt's technique and conversational charm. If Mr. Roosevelt's heralded charm is no more than is here realized it is a wonder that the Republicans have not sent him to the sandlots long ago. And it is no wonder that Teheran is the kind of thing Forrest Davis has recently shown it to be.

For the amazing fact is, that Mr. Sinclair is not technically a novelist at all. And the book must be classed with what used to be called the picaresque. The result is that you must not take it seriously. You do not get history—but the illusion of history. For instance the policy toward Franco Spain is here shown to be the result of Mr. Roosevelt's reluctant but necessary yielding to the pressures of the Catholic hierarchy. I hope that the documents will not make it as simple as all that. But you do get entertaining fiction. For the impossible is happening before your believing eyes. And you are in the presence of an audacity denied even to Scott and to Dumas. For they confined their history to what was long since embalmed.

This series, incidentally, shows some leaps in the educational processes of Upton Sinclair. For one thing, he has got down off the soap box. For another he makes some concessions to the business of writing fiction, and less to doctrine. He has discovered, too, that life, men and motives are a little more tortuous and complex than, hitherto, he had conceded. Ten years ago he would have written this kind of book, if at all, as a pure, undisguised

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essay in mathematical and righteous socialism. The change is a victory for Mr. Sinclair and for human nature.

My guess is that the book is already being shaped into a movie scenario. And it will, probably, provide the same excitement as the discovery that Mr. Hitchcock had all the time been Humphrey Clinker.

FRANCIS DOWNING.

Frontiers of American Culture. A Study of Adult Education in a Democracy. James Truslow Adams. Scribner's. $2.50.

INTEREST in adult education and recognition of its importance and astonishing coverage in a democratic land resulted in the American Association for Adult Education which, financed by the Carnegie Institute, has sponsored some twenty-seven volumes dealing with every possible phase of formal and informal education for older people. To introduce these studies, a grant was obtained to publish this over-all study and introduction by Mr. James Truslow Adams, an outstanding and candid interpreter of America to reading Americans, yet no educationalist. Like a scholastic he commences his labors in an effort to define his terms *democracy, education,* and even *adult,* which he does so well that he obscures very properly the meaning of those terms. Rare is the individual who can define communism, fascism, socialism or newdealism. Then at times he wanders afield so as to write an over-all of his voluminous writings with some reminiscent and autobiographical observations. This is far from objectionable, for he has introduced more people to American history than Harvard, and on a master's degree from Yale.

In these instructive pages many lessons are spelled out: the inherent ability of the teacher or scholar rather than the doctorate; the importance of learning by work and experience; the success of individualism over against the failure of communism since early Jamestown; toleration and democracy based upon facts in America not on ideologies; the sanctity of private property, root-hog, not relief; importance of the farm, frontier and fortune; the significance of public schools over the 1,700 colleges; and economy and thrift cultivated by sound money and less government in the affairs of men. When one reads of 240,000 men lost to the army under its low illiteracy tests, there is room for an auditor to inspect this nation's enormous expenditure for formal schooling. Adult education brings up almost anything: town meetings, cracker boxes, sermons, Chautauquas, lyceums, crusading movements, advertising, Montgomery Ward catalogues, libraries, museums, newspapers, radio, clubs, unions, the Rotary and Kiwanis, Parent-Teacher Associations, summer schools for workers, public art galleries, university extension, and correspondence courses. Anything that will educate must be fostered. And when the real boys who went to camp or overseas come back as grown men, they will want vocational educations—much of it adult education—more than stodgy courses in residence for credit toward degrees whose value is determined by the school's accreditation.

There are some of the inaccuracies of broad-painting. Irish immigration would probably have been about as large if there had been no famine. Only indirectly did the '48 movement send Germans to the States. Nor did all the Irish settle in the Bostons along the coast. And disgraceful as is the professional municipal boss and his ward-healers beating up racial votes, one wonders if

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great statesmen have not risen on the shoulders of bosses, even Irish bosses, in conventions and elections and if in turn they have not sustained machines with contracts, jobs and protection. The sins charged to minorities are often the responsibility of majorities; the clannishness of the immigrant races, the result of racial, religious intolerance of old Americans. The self or enforced segregation of foreigners is disappearing in the selective service as are even the race covenants in the west ends of cities. In this book, as usual, Mr. Adams is quotable in his challenges, sharp in his criticisms and shrewd in his observations. After all he has had a great deal of adult education.

RICHARD J. PURCELL.

Race: Nation: Person. A Symposium Edited by G. Barry O'Toole. Barnes. $3.75.

THESE are sickening headlines: Armies pounding each other about austere Caen; priceless treasures of culture left in smoking ruin; bombers over Frankfurt; death in Berlin, in Burma, on lonely atolls. With the cost mounting on each bloody day, we cannot avoid the query, why? What are the issues involved? Are they worth the cost? Certainly it is not if our only purpose is to defeat the enemy. If victory be our only goal, then history will demand a heavy accounting.

But there are deeper issues, and it is well to take stock of them in these critical days. If we are to continue to destroy till all resistance is broken, we must be sure of fundamentals. That is why this symposium is important reading even though part of it was written before 1939. One might feel that it is rather late to point out the folly of racism; to review its philosophical absurdities; to discuss its repudiation of objective law and to demonstrate that it has abandoned the primary conquests of civilization —the dignity and freedom of man, and the equality of his human nature. All this may seem as futile today as a treatise on the morality of aerial bombing. But it is only if these truths are clearly apprehended that we can go forward with conviction.

It is a shabby thing, this nazism, a hodge-podge of errors assembled by opportunism and cloaking a naked thirst for power. Yet, it is an expression of forces latent in our culture, and under favorable circumstances, could happen here. Fundamentally, it is the fruit of an ideology that has turned its back on ethics and religion and it is a warning of the consequences of such a loss. It is a counter-revolution, not in the usual meaning, but in the sense that it has overturned the concepts that were introduced into our civilization by Christianity. Because this volume makes these points clear, it is worth a whole library of revelations of Gestapo atrocities.

The different papers in this volume vary in value; the most important is the sane discussion of the key issue of nationalism by Don Luigi Sturzo. He makes the important distinction between the natural rights, belonging to human personality, and the relative rights that are born historically with the formation of a nation. All society exists for the individuals composing it; this is particularly true of the nation which has far less definite contours than the family. Hence the needs of the nation cannot be asserted against the natural rights of men, whether or not they belong to the same nation. The author works out this premise in the current interpretations of nationalism, and draws practical conclusions of great value.

With some exceptions, the papers in this volume are not easy reading. The style is heavy with scholastic phrasing, especially in those chapters which are translations. The tragedy of such technical language is that the vital content will not be read by those who need it most. There is considerable overlapping, and there are sections, such as the synopsis of pantheism in the history of philosophy, that could well be omitted. But the whole is tremendously significant and should not be missed.

JOSEPH N. MOODY.

Either/Or. Soeren Kierkegaard. Vol. 1. Translated by David F. Swenson and Lillian Marvin Swenson. Vol. 2. Translated by Walter Lowrie. Princeton. $7.50.
For Self Examination and Judge for Yourselves. Soeren Kierkegaard. Translated by Walter Lowrie. Princeton. $2.50.
Training in Christianity. Soeren Kierkegaard. Translated by Walter Lowrie. Princeton. $3.00.

THE ADMIRERS and followers of Soeren Kierkegaard may be pleased to know that four more volumes of his works have been translated and published. The Princeton University Press has the merit of giving America and all English-speaking countries a worthy and representative version of this great Protestant Christian, the pride of his native Denmark. The late David Swenson and his widow, Lillian Marvin Swenson, translated and edited the first volume of Soeren Kierkegaard's "Either/Or," while its second and larger volume has again been done by his indefatigable apostle, the Reverend Walter Lowrie. The latter has also finally arranged to beat the paper shortage and have earlier translated works published now: two volumes of edifying discourses; "Training in Christianity," and another one collecting four searching sermons. These two volumes are Kierkegaard's last will, a wholesome sermon for any Christian. The translations are masterpieces, in elegant, readable English. Mr. Lowrie's introduction will make it less difficult for the reader to grasp the meaning of it all. Nobody can read S. K. without experiencing the shattering earnest of his prophetic voice and without undergoing a metanoia. This is nothing for tired literati or snobs. You will either lay it aside in boredom or irritation, or train yourself in Christianity. H. A. REINHOLD.

Father Meany and "The Fighting 69th." Burris Jenkins, Jr. Fell. $1.00.

IT IS a story that is bound to be remembered, and it has all the features demanded by Hollywood: the Chaplain of the Fighting 69th wounded in the first action in which this famous unit engaged in World War II. It has one dramatic moment: a private, shocked by the sight of the bleeding chaplain, stoops to administer medical aid, and is killed by enemy bullets as he leans over the fallen priest. It is splendidly illustrated by the author, and is a glowing tribute to a priest in battle. Yet, it fails to be an outstanding combat story. It is told in the third person and lacks that portrayal of personal reactions that alone can make these tales significant.

All Embarrassed. William Steig. Duell. $2.00.

STEIG melds the linear Cocteau and the formalized American Indian into Steig. Those who know his drawings will cherish this excellent collection; a bit savage, but piercing in its misanthropy and insight into our vagaries. The book contains 101 reproductions.

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The Inner Forum

"The Annals of the Four Masters"

ON JUNE 30 the Irish Free State is issuing new half-penny and one shilling stamps to commemorate the three hundredth anniversary of the death of Brother Michael O'Clery, O.F.M. This noted poet, antiquarian and historian had at one time served as a soldier in the Spanish Army in the Low Countries, after which he joined the Irish Franciscans at the University of Louvain. From thence he was ultimately sent back to Ireland to collect and copy ancient manuscripts and collect material on the lives of the Irish Saints.

Brother Michael O'Clery retired to the secluded convent of Donegal on January 22, 1632, and worked there until August 10, 1636. He wrote in his dedication: "All the best and most copious books of annals that I could find throughout all Ireland were collected by me . . . into one place to write this book." In producing this classic, "Annals of the Four Masters," his principal collaborators were Farfassa O'Mulconry, Peregrine O'Clery and Peregrine O'Duignan. This vast compilation treated a wide range of subjects, and covered chiefly the period from the time of Christ to the beginning of the seventeenth century. It dealt with Irish kings, chiefs, heads of families, men of learning and of art. It told of the death and succession of saints, abbots, bishops and other ecclesiastical dignitaries. It touched on battles and crimes and political changes, the establishment and destruction of churches, monasteries, convents and other religious foundations. It summarized the lore of the old vellum books of Ireland which were soon to succumb to the ravages of time. Or as Brother O'Clery put it, in dedicating these annals, "Should the writing of them be neglected at present, they would not again be found to put on record even to the end of the world."

The original of the Annals has long since disappeared. But at least three editions—not all of them complete—have been known to be published in English. The most famous of these, the work of John O'Donovan, was published in Dublin in 1851. It contains the Irish text of the Annals, its translation into English and an extensive bibliography; this edition comprises seven large quarto volumes. It is said that no Irish historical question can be definitively settled without reference to this monumental work. Brother Michael O'Clery is also famous for the dictionary of difficult, obscure and archaic Irish terms which he produced after returning to Louvain in 1637.

CONTRIBUTORS

Harry SYLVESTER writes fiction for *Collier's* and other magazines; he is at present living on Cape Cod.

Oliver W. EVANS is a private in the Air Corps; before entering the Army he was a member of the English department at Vanderbilt University, who had previously had articles published in the learned journals and in various literary quarterlies, among them the *Southwest Review.*

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Next Week

WHAT NOT TO DO WITH SPAIN, by Alfredo Mendizábal, the culmination of a penetrating series of Commonweal articles on the subject of Spain. Professor Mendizábal discusses such possibilities as the restoration of the monarchy, a Leftist overturn of Franco or a truly democratic solution of the crisis in his native land. The able author of "The Martyrdom of Spain" believes firmly that the only way out is the democratic one, and he presents the means of reaching such an outcome.

EYELESS IN LHASA, by A. F., is a brilliant analysis of the life of prayer and the ideas of Mr. Gerald Heard, author of "A Preface to Prayer" and at present leader of a small college of prayer in California. Mr. Heard, who is well known to radio audiences throughout Great Britain, is a devotee of the wisdom of the East, particularly of Buddhism and Taoism, as well as of certain aspects of Christianity which particularly attract him. A. F. tells of Heard's contributions to the subjects of prayer as well as of his aberrations.

Also lively comment on books, plays, movies and headlines of the week.

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